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SOURCE Ogonek, Vol XXVII, No 22, 1949.NAKHICHEVAN ASSR PUSHES RURAL ECONOMY

V. Viktorov

Nakhichevan' has just lived through the severest winter within memory. At times, it even seemed as if the sheep, one of the mainsprings of the tiny republic's economy, would die out for lack of fodder.

Nakhichevan', an autonomous republic within Azerbaydzhan SSR, includes five rayons: Morashenskiy, which produces cotton and tobacco; Shakhbuzskiy, a flourishing mountainous cattle-raising region; Jul'finskiy, a grape-growing region; Ordubadskiy, a fruit-growing and cocoon-raising area; and the Nakhichevanskiy, a sheep-raising rayon.

Nakhichevan' is situated along the banks of the Araks River and, for its size, has a remarkably varied economy. Besides cattle-raising, its principal crops are cotton and tobacco.

Cotton is becoming its leading product. Thousands of hectares are sown with it, and within a year, another thousand will be added. Seventy of the 202 kolkhozes raise cotton, and there would be more of them but for the difficulties of irrigation. From time immemorial the inhabitants have been resigned to the yearly losses of burned crops. In the summer, there are almost no rains. The peasants have been accustomed in the past to dig deep wells for water. The poverty-stricken people had no means to utilize the mountain rivers which passed them by. Today, however, great operations are under way in the building of reservoirs and canals.

The life of the people has changed. The women of the East are no longer the veil-burdened creatures whose life was circumscribed by the chores within the hovel. Today, all roads are open to them. A case in point is Sakina Rzaev, Minister of Social Insurance.

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The republic has produced its own intelligentsia. The Mamedkulizade Teachers' Institute, during its 10 years' existence, has licensed 390 pedagogues: naturalists, physicists, mathematicians, and historians, including 110 women.

Instead of the old villages, with their wretched windowless huts, whole villages of new houses have appeared. As an example, the native village of Ragim Ragimov, President of the Council of Ministers, Nakhichevan' ASSR, is cited. Within the last 15 years it has acquired a dyesyatilyetka (ten-year school), which is a beautiful modern structure, an electric station, an excellent bath house, a hospital, and a children's nursery.

Electrification is proceeding full pace. The electrification of 40 kolkhozes is envisaged in the near future. This is symbolic of the change that has taken place in the village, which, before the Revolution, was unfamiliar with even a kerosene lamp.

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